

Transcript for Michael McGrath letter to Joseph Dolan.

"No 9 Linenhall Street
Dublin
Sunday

Dear Mr Dolan,

Wee (sic) were very glad to get your letter today and to know you are quite well as this leaves us all at present thank God. Wee (sic) are after passing through a most awful time since Easter Monday. It is sad to think of such an ill advised raising (sic) and the sacrifice of so many innocent lives when no sane men would have thought the(y) could succeed in their [disig...]. Wee (sic) were wining (sic) slowly but surely by constitutional means and the National Volunteers were a power in the land but I greatly fear poor Ireland has got a great set back by resorting to arms. It was glorious to see the courage and devotion with which the(y) stood to what the(y) thought was their duty and on the other hand so many young (page 2) lives sacrificed and all the young men that will be exiled at a time when Ireland can least spare them.

Dear Mr Dolan I now know some of the horrors off (sic) war. We were right in the thick of it there were baracades (sic) all round us and constant snipping (sic) all the week. I had to cross two lines of fire twice a day going to the stable and watch for a lull and then put your hands up and on Friday morning a ball passed through the stable door within 6 inches of my head. At the same time I saw a country man that was held up and starving come out to look for bread and got shot dead at one of the lines I had to cross. Another freind (sic) of our (sic) went out on the same errand as he could not stand (page 3) the children crying for bread he was not 3 yards from the door when he was shot dead. The people lost their heads with hunger and the dread expectang (sic) of what was going to happen next no milk for children no bread in some few shops that had some the (sic) charged as high as 6d for 2lb loves (sic) and not half enough to goe (sic) round butter 3 to 6s per lb. The people had no money as most of the working classes depend on the pawn offices for Easter Tuesdays (sic) supply and then the seperation (sic) allowance and allotments could not be paid but when the looting started some actually went mad. One could buy a roll of tweed for 6d. I myself saw a £2 coat sold for 6d. I saw children 10 years carrying boxes off (sic) Bovril, tinned milk, soap and all kinds of merchandice (sic). I saw one (page 4) man in JH Webbs window strip off his old clothes and fit himself in a new suit as cool as if he was paying for them. It was a regular reign of terror at Williams Henry St everything but the walls was carried away. I saw women drunk and fighting for bottles of whiskey and yet I was not out for more than an hour at any time I had to keep at home not knowing the moment I would be cut off from home and the terror of my wife and children but the worst of all started on Thursday when the (sic) set the barracks on fire it burned all night, then Hugh, Moors, Dolans, Druggists, McMaster, Hodgesens Stores and [Lackies] Paper Works so wee (sic) were surrounded (sic) by fire on two sides and constant shooting all round from the street and the roofs but on Friday Hell was let loose when the military came in force (page 5) what with armoured moters (sic) and big guns and bombs there was constant firing all night long. And soldiers crowding into rooms it was bang, bang all night and cross firing from all quarters.

Wee (sic) were crouching in sheltered corners praying most of the time just after dinner on Saturday which consisted of 2 potatoes, 1 bit of turnip, 1 small slice of bacon, and the last 1/4lbs of bread in the house for us all. I had the escape of my life. There came a lull and I went to the corner of the window when a ball just shaved my eye and buryed (sic) in the wall at my ear. The sand of the wall came out on my face and I thought it was (page 6) torn off me but thank God I did not even get a scratch. I hope you will call to see us when you are in town and you will be surprised to know how I escaped. But the sadest (sic) thing of the whole war was the Louth Dairy ocurrence (sic) which is just round the corner from us where four young men were shot dead by the soldiers in their room. One James Finegan born in Stickillen and Paddy Hoey from above Dunleer. I was speaking to them on Thursday and they were wishing they had gone to the country while they could get away. Hoey was home for (page 7) Easter and came home Easter Monday. Another the son of the proprietors only 21 years and a young man who leaves a young widow. The (sic) came from Exchange St for safety the military buryed (sic) them in the yard but thank God wee (sic) removed them and gave them Christian buryal (sic). There were 14 inocents (sic) shot in that short street one man kneeling at a chair saying his prayers. I think all other Ardee people came safe. I was speaking to P Ward at the Market on Thursday week I did not get the opportunity of seeing him since when you come to town you (page 8) will wonder where you are. What was once Sackville St Earle St and Abby St and Hotel Metropol GPO and half Henry St is nothing but a heap of brick, and mortar. To see them today after 3 days and nights constant rain is something most oppressing. The marcial (sic) law is terrifying. Can you imagine the whole city in

daylight without a sinner or a sound any noise would make one jump. I would love to have a chat with you about the times as I can't write half what I should have to say to see people, decent workpeople fighting for bread and children crying was dreadful but St Vincent de Paul is doing a lot of good (top of page 1).

Have not space for more this time so will say goodbye hoping you are all well. I am sending you a keepsake* of the war. M. McGrath"

*The keepsake is a 'Dublin Metropolitan Police' headed note stating 'please pass the bearer Michael McGrath 9 Linenhall St to Georges Hill and back to 9 Linenhall St. Wm Gordon Supt 30.4.16'